

**PENNINGTON BOROUGH
REDEVELOPMENT MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
September 25 2024, 7:00 PM**

Mr. Davy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. He stated that the meeting was being held via a Zoom webinar and access to the meeting had been noticed.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Gian Paolo Caminiti, Kit Chandler, Jim Davy, Amy Kassler-Taub, Nadine Stern

Absent: Jim Reilly

BOARD PROFESSIONALS PRESENT: Jim Kyle, Planner, KMA Associates, Brandon Fetzer, Engineer, Van Note Harvey, Kaitlyn Macellaro, Board Secretary

DISCUSSION

Mayor Davy announced that a designation of a first chair and a second chair for the Redevelopment Committee is in order. He designated himself as first chair and said that we will vote on the second chair at the next meeting. He questioned the wording on the resolution whether he was one out of the two members on the Planning Board. Ms. Chandler asked if he was a separate entity and stated that it is an advertised meeting that he can attend. Ms. Stern suggested that we modify the resolution. Mayor Davy stated that he will have Mr. Bliss, the Borough Attorney, look it over and will get back to the Commission at the next meeting.

Mr. Kyle stated that he has been doing a lot of redevelopment work in Princeton and they review everything in advance of going to the Planning Board or the governing body. He said we want to provide guidance for potential redevelopers for certain instances. He stated that we are going to try and entice redevelopment in the landfill process. He described that the purpose of this Committee is hearing ideas from potential redevelopers and reviewing materials that they submit in a smaller group before it gets released to the public and/or bigger groups within the Borough. He stated how there are four areas of redevelopment in Pennington as of now. He explained that the approach he takes for redevelopment is a cooperative process with the redeveloper in developing the concept and then we write a redevelopment plan once the Commission is comfortable. He said the goal is to have a redevelopment plan where the redeveloper can bring a site plan to the Planning Board without variances or waivers. Ms. Stern suggested that we get the word out about this Committee and give the public a chance to speak before we form a redevelopment plan. Mayor Davy confirmed that he put public participation process under each property on the agenda. Ms. Chandler suggested that we use the same template for the Streetscape Committee with open sessions at Borough Hall. Mayor Davy recommended that we can send a notice out to the surrounding property owners even though we don't have to.

Mr. Kyle shared an aerial photograph of the landfill site and described that this property has already been designated as an area of redevelopment. He described that this site has three properties: block 206, lots 4, 5 and 12. Ms. Chandler stated that a man-made ditch, that is now considered a stream, runs along the property line. Mr. Fetzer said that the water might be coming from the old reservoir. Ms. Stern asked what the riparian zone is and if we could develop in that area. Mr. Kyle stated that you typically can't develop in a riparian zone, but there are exceptions. He said that the landfill would have to be capped in some manner, usually an impervious cap. Ms. Chandler asked if the riparian zone is where you can steal from one section and give back to another to make it average. Mr. Kyle confirmed that is wetland buffers. Mr. Fetzer stated that you can build in a riparian zone, but you have to justify why when applying for a permit. Mr. Kyle spoke about how we can work with a redeveloper to come up with a plan to cap the landfill. He noted that there may be some limitations on residential development because of the landfill. He said a professional commercial development or non-residential development would be more practical. Mr. Kyle explained that the next step would be to put out a request for proposals to the development community. Mayor Davy announced that the environmental investigation is not complete on this property. He stated that the big rainstorm that we had about a month ago raised some concerns on what we can do onsite to mitigate downstream negative impacts. Mayor Davy asked if we should do a public participation meeting before we send out the RFP. Ms. Chandler suggested that we reach out to the Fire Department for their input as well. She stated that the BORO Restaurant is interested in using that property behind them for additional parking spaces. She noted that West Delaware Avenue is a road leading into Pennington Borough and it is very important to maintain a Pennington Borough visual as you drive into Pennington from Route 31. Mr. Kyle explained that part of lot 12 is in a flood hazard area and you can't have a building in that section. Mr. Fetzer asked if the DEP have identified any ongoing monitoring or management things, like gas or water capture, that he needs to do. Mayor Davy stated the main thing they were talking about is the landfill needs a cap. Mr. Kyle pointed out that there are a lot of monitoring wells due to the public water supply that is still functioning on this property. Mr. Fetzer stated that the Borough will need to maintain an acre around the functioning well if we start to carve out any property. Mr. Kyle asked if we should do the public participation in person or on Zoom. Ms. Chandler said that she thinks we should do it in person, but give people the ability to send an email if they can't attend. Ms. Stern stated that the advantage of having it on Zoom would be that the video will be available for people who can't attend. She noted that there is a newsletter coming out soon and it would be a good idea to put an article in there talking about this Committee. Mr. Fetzer suggested that we have the materials readily available at Borough Hall for people to look at. Mr. Kyle recommended that we create a portion of the Borough website for the redevelopment process similar to how the Master Plan is set up. Ms. Chandler asked if Pennington Borough owns the property that the Fire House is on, lot 6, or if they own it. Mayor Davy confirmed that the Borough owns the First Aid Squad building. Mayor Davy asked if the Redevelopment Committee should meet every third Wednesday of each month. Mr. Caminiti stated that the Public Works Committee meets on every third Wednesday of the month. Mayor Davy asked if the last Wednesday of every month is good for everyone to meet. The Committee agreed to meet on October 23, 2024 at 7PM for a public participation about the landfill site. Ms. Chandler reminded to send out a separate letter to the BORO Restaurant and the Fire Department since they showed interest in this site in the past. Mr. Caminiti stated that he can reach out to them.

Mr. Kyle described that the Blackwell property is five lots and stretches from Green Street to North Main Street. He explained that lots 3 and 6 have an occupied single family home on it. He described that lots 2, 3 and 5 have a variety of buildings on it with another single family home fronting Green Street on lot 2. He stated that there has been a lot of discussion during the investigation about the old barn on lot 2. He explained that most of the non-residential structures are in rough shape. Mayor Davy confirmed that the Governing Body adopted a resolution and Ms. Sterling sent it to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for approval. Mr. Kyle stated that he has not heard anything from the State yet, but if they do not respond within thirty days then it is deemed to have been approved. He noted that there were a number of areas of concern during phase one of the property. He discussed that phase two will involve soil sampling and a more in depth analysis of potential contamination issues. Mayor Davy asked if it lessens the flooding issues if the building on lot five is removed and the drainage is daylighted. Mr. Fetzer explained that it would make it worse because you are moving more water down towards Park Avenue and King George Road. Ms. Chandler asked if we can re-establish the pond that used to be where the building is now as a catch basin for the water. Mr. Kyle stated that all of these drainage systems have been in there for fifty or sixty years and they are not sized for the storms that we are getting these days. He said that he expects full frontage improvements on Brookside Avenue as part of redevelopment for these properties. Mr. Kyle confirmed to wait until we receive more information to have a public participation meeting. Mayor Davy asked if we need to send a letter to the Blackwell's to request more information from them in order to proceed with the redevelopment plan. Mr. Kyle stated that he has been in contact with Bruce Vinci for updates on the property. Ms. Stern announced that Dan Rubenstein thinks the Borough should buy this property and develop it for opportunities for revenue generation.

Mr. Kyle reported that the Planning Board is going to hold a public hearing on the investigation report for Route 31 and Delaware Avenue. Mr. Fetzer announced that Frontier Properties, the group that is currently developing the Starbucks, is interested in turning this property into a Wawa. Mr. Kyle stated that a Wawa would not be permitted there because it is a safety issue.

Mr. Kyle stated that a potential resolution to authorize a study for an area in need of redevelopment for 10 North Main Street is in place. He described that attached to the rear of 12 North Main Street is an office building. He stated that Mr. Bruce Vinci purchased this building and approached him with the idea of all affordable apartments. They ran through the economics and he is going to balance the affordables with the market rate to get it to a point that works for Mr. Vinci financially.

Ms. Chandler made a motion, seconded by Mr. Caminiti to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor to adjourn via voice vote at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Macellaro
Planning Board Secretary